

>> of these older folk, especially those on fixed incomes looking to supplement in some way. If they can get any money, they are going to fall for it. They are just such easy targets.

I had my parents as examples on so many things that I did not realize were scams at the time. If I had had that knowledge, I could have prevented a lot of that. My big go-to is prevention. I want to prevent people from losing their money because if I don't, once their money is gone, they will never get it back, and it is just pitiful. Research shows that if our elderly folks lose everything they have, if they lose their assets, they don't live that long afterward. It has a lot to do with trust and resources. They don't have the resources to maintain the healthy lifestyle they once had. So, it is really sad.

When the chief decided to start the Crimes Against Seniors Unit, what were the needs he saw that sparked his decision to create this unit?

He was really progressive as far as looking into the future and projecting what would happen. The baby-boomer generation was getting older. In 2006, a person was turning 60 every seven and one-half seconds. So, I guess he looked into the future to see where we should be going and where we needed to put our assets. The grant came about; they applied for it and received it. You don't know the magnitude of these cases until you start looking into them. Reporting is mandatory. We saw a big surge of reports, but I think it was always there, people just did not know to report it or to whom to report it. I think elder abuse has been there forever, and we just started to look at it. Then all the reports started coming in because people knew someone looked at them, so they needed to report it. I think he saw how the population was aging, and with that aging population come crimes that target them.

Research shows that a lot of elderly people have the majority of the money and the assets. They have the car and the house, and everything is paid for — and they have a lot of family members who want it. Family exploitation is the majority of the exploitation, I believe. The family members know what they have, and they know where it is.

In 2010 you received the ElderServe Champion for the Aging Award. What is ElderServe and how does the AG's Office partner with ElderServe?

They are a resource in the community that provides a lot of resources for our elders. ElderServe's Executive Director Harriet Friedlander is just phenomenal. As far as the AG's Office partnering with them, we don't really partner. ElderServe has limited resources on what they can do in our cases because a lot of our people are either in a group home or nursing facility. But, ElderServe is a resource to help the family if they are given power of attorney, for example. Many family members do not really know what to do with that. A lot of them try to do the right thing. It is not a given that because someone has power of attorney he or she is going to steal all the money. Though it is kind of like a license to do that, and we see it, there are good folks out there that just don't know what to do.

There are so many resources that we can use on anything, anywhere, and every

community's different on what resources they have. Louisville has just been at the top of the game because they have so many resources. The ElderServe organization is one of the best resources that provides services, training and all kinds of programs to help with elder issues. We don't partner, but we use their services when we can.

How were you chosen for the ElderServe award?

I guess it was my experience at the police department. At that point, I did community abuse, neglect and exploitation. I didn't target facilities because that's what Medicaid Fraud and Abuse Control Unit did. I was more in the community, and I had the opportunity to help build it up to what it is today by focusing on whatever issues there were. At the police department, we helped in the 2005 passage of the elder abuse law by interjecting what we saw in our investigations.

I'm totally honored with the award because some of the people who are the



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